

The CACHALOT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHAMPTON MASTER MARINERS' CLUB

No 70

December 2018

Captain's Log

2nd September: I attended the Merchant Navy Service at Holy Rood church which was arranged by the Solent Branch of the Merchant Navy Association.

The weather was kind to us and the service well attended, including the Mayor, Councillor Stephen Barnes-Andrew, and the Lady Mayoress. Chaplain John Attenborough conducted the service.

It was noted that all the memorial plaques from the old seafarers centre have now been placed at the Holy Rood Church. However, security of these important plaques is in question as they are open to anyone, including vandals or thieves and I would appreciate other members' views. It was a pleasure to see Captain Hans Juelsdorff's widow and her three daughters attending this service.

5th September: 29 members and guest attended the club supper and I had great pleasure to present our Editor Captain Terry Clark with an engraved plaque in honour of his long and dedicated service to the club.

I then had the pleasure to introduce our speaker Captain Robin Plumley who gave an interesting talk about his many years in the Antarctic.

11th September: Visited Hillary Pretty and delivered the club flag for her to take to the undertakers for draping the coffin at the forthcoming funeral service of her husband Reg Pretty.

20th September: Attended the cremation of Reg Pretty at Wessex Vale Crematorium. The service was well attended with very few seating places left, a clear indication that he was well liked. Reg and Hillary have been strong supporters of our club for many years. The service was followed by refreshments at the Concord Club in Eastleigh.

27th September: Attended Entertainments Committee & Management meeting.

4th October: Attended the funeral service for Captain C A McDowall at St. Peters Church in West Wittering. Our members Captains Reg Kelso, Terry Clark, Les Morris, Ivor Salter, David Dunn and Dennis Barber also attended the service. Allan had been suffering for a long time with cancer and was well cared for by his wife to the very end. Both Allan and Helen have been strong supporters of our club for many years.

5th October: Attended the Macmillan's Coffee morning, which was held at the RBL clubroom. Sadly the event was not attended by as many as we hoped but still raised a very respectable £560.

10th October: It was a great honour to attend the annual service to Seafarers at St. Paul's Cathedral in London and I was pleased to meet up with fellow members Ian

Thomson and Ken Owen along with their wife's and delighted to be invited for supper on HMS "Wellington" after the service. While I was waiting to meet them I had the honour of talking to The First Sea Lord, Sir Phillip Jones, who had recognised me from the Court Luncheon on board HMS "Wellington" back in March.

I also was delighted to be able to say hallo to Commodore Duncan Lamb of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

19th October: I Attended Trafalgar Dinner at the Grand Café which was a success and raised £1455.00 for the Southampton Sea Cadet Unit which is currently in the process of a major expansion programme with Captain Andrew Moll as the unit Chairman. I have been a member for many years and can therefore not stress enough as to how important it is for youngsters to be given such an opportunity in life with unique skills and discipline and I would encourage anyone with sufficient capital to consider further donations to Southampton Sea Cadet Unit. The Mayor, Cllr Stephen Barnes-Andrews, and his wife Amanda were impressed with the cadets when they had recently attended their AGM. Our speaker Cdre Bob Sanguinetti was excellent and finished with the immortal Memory.

The Portsmouth Shanty Men were a real success and it was a nice ending to the evening.

There were a few issues, which need to be discussed with the Grand Café for any future events, and for me it was frustrating to have to get the attention of a staff member every time I was in need of the microphone.

4th November: 23 Captains, Harpooners and Cachalots attended the Harpooners Dinner at the Star Hotel, where the food and service was excellent. When it was realised that no provision had been made regarding a gratuity a quick whip-round was made which salved our consciences and satisfied the staff.

I have been saddened by the recent loss of several members and the illness that some members and their families have and still are suffering from but it heartening to see how resilient and determined they are in perservering and still attending the Club functions.

My best wishes to all members and their families and Christmas greetings to you all.

Club Captain
Captain Flemming N Pedersen



Boatsteerer's Locker

Fellow Cachalots

It won't be too long before Christmas and the festivities are upon us, so in preparation the burra mem-sahib and I went on a cruise to the German Waterways to plan ahead. (having 7 grand children and 1½ great grand children and having to write this Blog will take some planning.)

Unfortunately I missed the Mayor's Trafalgar Dinner which by all accounts was a great success. My only worry is that it does not affect our Sea Pie Supper attendance in February.

We joined the Bahamas flagged good ship in Southampton which could carry 930 fare paying passengers (I don't approve of the current practice of calling them guests) and set sail with only 715.

I was surprised that at the Muster Drill prior to sailing we were not required to attend with our lifejacket but were treated to a demonstration by the crew as to the method of donning them. Perhaps our Scandinavian Captain and his East European Officers had every confidence that his British passengers who would carry out 'The Birkenhead Drill' if there was a mishap. We duly arrived in Hamburg but were only there for a day in daylight hours, however we did a city tour on the Hop On Hop Off bus. We traversed the Kiel Canal that night and arrived in Flensburg at dawn and being a cold Sunday the only thing open was the church. We then went overnight to Travemunde and took a morning excursion to Lubeck, where as it was Monday the museums etc. were closed, however we managed to do some shopping in Travemunde.

Due to forecast adverse weather conditions our Kiel Canal transit and visit to Bremen was cancelled and instead we went to Kiel for two days. Kiel had changed a great deal since my last visit when I joined my first ship in the repair yard. Gone are the concrete submarine bunkers and bomb rubble and now there are plenty of parks etc. thanks to bomb damage. I had to do the obligatory shopping but next day being a public holiday I went on a coach to the Naval Memorial and U-boat U995 at Laboe leaving the burra mem-sahib on a City Tour.

The following day we transverse the Kiel Canal in daylight and headed for home arriving on the morning of the Harpooners Dinner. The well attended Dinner as held last year in 'The Star' Hotel was a five course affair which caused me to look for indigestion tablets in the night.

My next item on my agenda is to organise meetings with HALO, Shantymen and Master of Ceremonies to finalise the Sea Pie Supper arrangements.

The AGM is also looming, on 10th Jan. and one Harpooner, John Noble, comes to the end of his 2 yr term and is willing to stand for re-election. A list for nominations, proposers and seconders will go up in the clubroom.

Myself and Storekeeper Ian Odd are also due to retire this year but, under Rule 7, we shall be eligible for re-appointment by the Management Committee.

Please note that I will not be sending Christmas Cards to fellow members again this year but will make a donation to the Captain's Charity instead. I hope that other members do the same.

Finally Richard, Liz and the Management Committee would like to take this opportunity to wish you all 'Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year' and don't get too turkified or inebriated.

Ken Dagnall

From the Editor

My apologies to Past Capt Ian Thomson for misspelling *Scawfell* with a k in 'Lost vessels and saved treasure' in the last edition. Not once, but three times and yet the correct spelling appeared another six times in the article. One of the perils of 'cut & paste' is that it is so easy to position chunks of text on a page without actually (proof) reading it.

We haven't, as yet, discovered what the treasure was that Capt Thomson's forebear saved from the *Cathaya* in 1857. It will need a visit to the Merseyside Maritime Museum to solve that one I suspect.

One little riddle has been solved however. If, like me, you thought that the old Norwegian skipper of the foundering barque was being very cruel by not allowing the large Newfoundland dog to be rescued too, the answer actually lies in George Thomson's words; "...would not let him come in the boat in case the barque lasted out till fine weather & was picked up..." . Under maritime law pertaining then, and probably now, if there was a living dog or cat on board, then the vessel could not be deemed to be a derelict or abandoned and subsequently claimed for salvage. So the poor old dog was sacrificed, just in case.

You may recall that, a few years ago, I printed a series of 'dredgings' here that were the reminiscences of Cachalot Eddie Hunter. I have had to do some dredging of my own in search of copy and came up with another of Eddie's contributions in my optimistically entitled 'pending file'.

I had previously put it to one side as being too long for this magazine but have now split it into smaller chunks and present Part I in this edition. I hope that the quality of Eddie's prose and story telling will inspire and encourage a few more of you out there to put pen to paper, or finger to keyboard.



Past Captain John Noble gets his hands on the Calcutta Cup at a Friends of Scottish Rugby dinner in September at which former Scottish Internationals Damian Cronin, Kelly Brown and Craig Chalmers were the speakers. John had to wear gloves as only players who had won a match are allowed to actually touch it.



With falling attendances and support for the Christmas Dinner it has been decided to forego the event this year. The cost of a suitable venue proscribes a viable outcome at a reasonable cost.

The less formal Christmas Luncheon is proving more popular.

Christmas Lunch at the Medbar

**Saturday 1st December
1200 for 1230**

Join the crowd at the Medbar in Oxford Street, where we will have exclusive use of the upstairs room and you will have the choice of four starters, mains and desserts, all for **£23** per head, to include the gratuity.

A raffle will be held, proceeds to the Captain's Charity.
Donations of prizes will be appreciated.

AGM

Thursday 10th January 2019, 18-30

in the Club room

Eastgate Street, Southampton.

Burns Supper

This year the
Caledonian Cultural Experience
will be held downstairs at the RBL on
Wednesday, 23rd January

Expect the traditional fare and
maybe something a wee bit different
in the entertainment.



1900 for 1930

Black Tie & Miniatures

£32 per head (tbc)

Sea Pie Supper

Friday 8th February 2019

St. Mary's Stadium

Tickets are now on sale, to members only,
on a first come, first served basis

£53 for members, **£65** for guests

Curry Lunch



KUTI'S ROYAL PIER

Sat 16th February 1200 for 1230

The first Curry Lunch of the year has been
booked at Kuti's again.

Price is **£16** each to include the gratuity.

Still excellent value and we hope you can join
us there.

Parking in Mayflower Park is currently
£2 for 4 hours

**The Coffee & Cakes - or Tea & Tabnabs -
morning on 5th October, in aid of
Macmillan Cancer Support
Raised a total of**

£560

Thanks to those who provided, made and
baked the cakes, jams and chutneys and
brewed and stewed the tea and coffee.



**WE ARE
MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT**

Subs & 250 Club

With this newsletter you should also receive your
subscription renewal form
&

'250 Club' Application

Also the Provisional Programme of Events for
2019

Trafalgar Dinner

There were 147 attendees at the second 'Admiral of the Port's Trafalgar Night Dinner', held in aid of the Southampton Sea Cadets, at Grand Café, South Western House, on the 19th October. They included Cachalots, their partners and guests, and other members of the local maritime community: from ABP, the Southampton Shipowners Association, Whitakers Tankers, Williams Shipping, the MAIB and the Southampton Sea Cadets.

The Reception, at which prosecco, soft drinks and 'hardtack' was served, was held in the splendidly refurbished lobby of South Western House. Guests were piped on board by a party of cadets from the Southampton Sea Cadet Corps. The Mayor of Southampton, Councillor Stephen Barnes-Andrews, who is also the Admiral of the Port, and the Mayoress, Mrs Amanda Barnes-Andrews, were received by Captain Flemming Pedersen, the Club Captain.

After 'All Hands to Dinner' was piped by cadets from the Southampton Sea Cadets, the Mayor's party processed to the Captain's Table, proceeded by the Mayor's Cadet carrying the Admiral of the Port's flag.

On the Captain's Table were: The Mayor and Mayoress; Captain Flemming Pedersen and Mrs Susanne Pedersen; Captain Reg Kelso MBE, President of the SMMC, and Mrs June Kelso; Commodore Bob Sanguinetti RN and Mrs Sylvia Sanguinetti; Captain Andrew Moll RN and Mrs Frances Moll; The Rev'd Reg Sweet RN, Master of St. Cross.

The assembly was welcomed by Capt. Pedersen who then introduced the Mayor who gave a short address in which he thanked us - The Cachalots - for pulling the event together. He also said "It sits very well in the maritime social calendar, filling the autumn gap between the Southampton Shipowners' summer ball and the Sea Pie Supper in the spring, and I hope that with this second event we are the start of a new Southampton tradition that will see the Trafalgar dinner grow from strength to strength."



*The Admiral of the Port
& The Mayor's Cadet*

Cachalot, Capt. Andrew Moll, Chairman of Trustees of the Southampton Sea Cadets, then made an appeal on behalf of the SSC in which he articulated the benefits that the organisation brings to the young people and the undoubted improvements in their personal development and self confidence.

The Nelson Grace was given by the Rev'd Sweet and the company settled down to an excellent meal including the traditional roast beef.

After the meal our President, Capt. Reg Kelso, gave the traditional Second Grace and Capt. Pedersen the Loyal Toast.

After a short break Commodore Bob Sanguinetti RN, CEO of the UK Chamber of Shipping, gave a well received speech which ended with the Toast to the Immortal Memory of Lord Nelson. He also announced the confirmation of the promotion of Captain Moll to Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents at the MAIB, which well anticipated appointment met with much applause.

The Mayoress was invited to draw the winning ticket for the Draw Prize, a latest generation iPad generously sponsored by the Southampton Shipowners Association, which was won by our own Shirley Messinger. The draw had raised **£1455** in donations.



*Commodore Sanguinetti RN gave the
toast to 'The Immortal Memory'*

The evening finished with the singing of some sea shanties and Heart of Oak and Rule Britannia, capably led by The Portsmouth Shantymen (*right*).

Some of the verses, particularly of *Drunken Sailor* were new to seasoned Sea Pie Supper attendees, and *Blow the Man Down* had been very Politically Corrected but it was all great fun and the company joined in heartily.

The event, once again, was deemed to be a great success by those who attended and enjoyed it.

Although we were a bit shy of the 150 that we contracted for, Grand Café did not penalise us any and our finances showed a better than expected surplus. It was decided to donate a further **£545** to the SSC, making up their proceeds for the night to **£2000**.



Carrying the can

Lloyd's List Viewpoint 25 October 2018

with kind permission of LL and the author, Cachalot Michael Grey

Isn't it time that society sorted out the realistic responsibilities of a shipmaster? With the master's responsibility increased, his authority constrained and his civil and criminal liabilities multiplying apace, the chances of a shipmaster managing to complete his seagoing career without ending up with a custodial sentence seem to be reducing apace.

This was brought to the fore earlier this month, when the mainstream media surprisingly reported a case of environmental crime being held in the Criminal Court of Marseilles. The master and operators of P&O's cruise ship *Azura* were charged with what amounts to atmospheric pollution, with the fuel being burned allegedly exceeding the local sulphur limit. The verdict will be given next month, but it could be that Captain Evans Hoyt could be given a 12 month custodial sentence and along with his employer, fined massively.

Nobody outside the environs of the French port would probably have noticed the case if it had been anything other than a huge cruise ship which had been so charged. It is hard to think of the master and owners of a tanker discharging at Fos, or an anonymous bulk carrier, hitting any sort of headlines. In the event, the matter assumed something of a technicality – a matter of 0.18% sulphur, over the limits prescribed of 1.68%. It may also hinge on whether this local limit is only supposed to apply to regular traders, as opposed to occasional callers at the port.

But this case ought to be seen more for its principles and the sheer unmitigated nonsense of subjecting the master of a ship to a criminal charge on account of the chemical composition of the contents of the bunker tanks. Doubtless the inhabitants of the French port, who probably resent the sheer volume of cruise passengers swarming ashore will hail the local law as a blow for fresh air and fewer crowds. But just consider the consequences of every port producing its own criteria for atmospheric emissions. And almost certainly, such provisions will be regarded as a useful new revenue stream, as hapless mariners bring their vessels into port, unaware that their ship's exhalations may breach port limits.

Captain Malcolm MacLachlan, whose huge book on Business for Shipmasters was published some years ago, once totted up the number of offences for which a shipmaster could be given a custodial sentence. It was a staggering total, but one might guess that the number has been greatly multiplied in the intervening years, with environmental criminality regarded as such a social evil and plenty of opportunity to throw the book at people in charge of ships. And with the advent of the sulphur cap in 2020 and increasing scrutiny of water ballast, there will be no shortage of potential victims for the zealous official looking for easier targets than are to be found ashore.

If you think about it for a few minutes and have more than cotton waste between your ears, you might just consider whether it is either fair or appropriate to hold the master of a ship criminally responsible for something that is completely outside his or her competence. It was pretty stupid to be giving masters criminal convictions after an oily leak from a stern seal was detected by an overflying aircraft. There was little natural justice about the sentences inflicted on shipmasters by the notorious French "Perben" courts, which would convict without any real evidence other than the "opinion" by an aerial photographer. But these were foreign shipmasters and nobody would make waves on their behalf. I have clear memories of a meeting with an ex-shipmaster, who decided that after 30 years, the risk of a criminal record was now so great that he had regretfully resigned. A criminal conviction on the record of a marine professional, who needs to travel worldwide, is no minor matter.

With new regulations on sulphur content, we enter a completely new area of nonsense. The regulators seem to think they are working in an area of precise science, when there is in fact no such precision to be found in the existing blending of marine fuels, and precious few standards. Unless the refiners change their game considerably, it is impractical to expect that fuel can be guaranteed to have a precise sulphur content, to the nearest decimal point of a percentage. It is worth pointing out that scarcely a week goes by without a warning from P&I clubs about "contaminated bunkers". And a master's reputation is to depend on this sector?

The efforts to make air around ports more breathable is entirely laudable and there is surely no objection to the detention of a ship that is completely ignoring the requirement to burn something other than heavy fuel oil, in the hope that nobody will notice. But the introduction of these new rules require sensitive handling, with due note of practical considerations. Getting all heavy handed and throwing the book at the master is unfair and wrong. And if ever there was a need for some sensible protocols about the implementation of the sulphur cap, it is now, before a global patchwork of local rules catches too many victims.

rjmgrey@dircon.co.uk



[A Short Voyage on a Square Rigger!](#)

This contribution from Post Captain Robin Plumley that will make many of us green with envy, when 'Going Aloft' was an adventure, not a final voyage!

In August 1974, British & Commonwealth cadets joined the crew of the ketch **Halcyon** for the Tall Ships Race, from St. Malo to Portsmouth.

Halcyon was the sail training vessel of the Southampton School of Navigation, Warsash. She came fourth in her class.

Cadets Mike Brook, Robin Plumley, Chris Edwards and Christopher Turner were four B&C cadets from the lucky few chosen to sail in the big Soviet barque, **Kruzenstern**.

The cadets were invited to recall their experiences in short feature stories for CLANSMAN, the British & Commonwealth house magazine.

The two winning entries from Cadet Plumley and Cadet Turner both earned a book token for their contributions. Both articles are replicated here.

Although the company is long gone I acknowledge the article in CLANSMAN which I have used. The photo showing us on the yard was supplied to CLANSMAN with the assistance of Novosti Press Agency with the picture provided by Soviet Weekly. All other colour images are the authors own.



Cadet Plumley, one of the lucky few, proudly describes the voyage and the vessel, but makes familiar noises about the unfamiliar food.

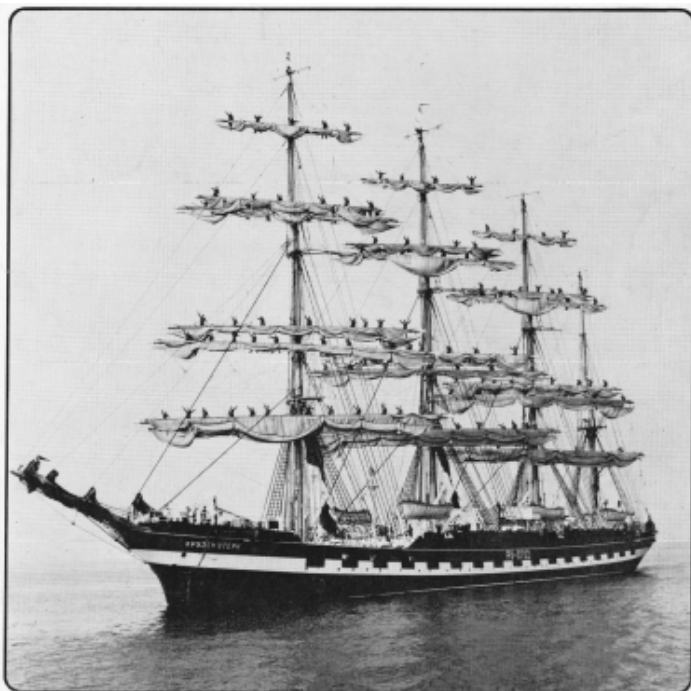
Kruzenstern

During the recent Tall Ships Race (while crewing for the School of Navigation, Warsash, ketch **Halcyon**) I was chosen, along with 19 other young people, to sail on the Russian four-masted barque **Kruzenstern** across to St. Malo. She had sailed to Portsmouth from Gdynia in Poland after taking part in the Copenhagen-Gdynia Race as part of Operation Sail 1974.

She is owned by the Ministry of Fishing in Moscow and is used as a training vessel for apprentice seamen and navigators who intend making a career in Russia's vast fishing fleet. Built in Germany in 1926 she was donated to the USSR after the Second World War.

We joined her on Sunday August 4 in the morning after permission had been obtained from Moscow. At 11.30 we had our first taste of Russian food. This consisted of a very watery tasteless vegetable soup which we were to have at nearly every meal. The main course was set out in a pot with potato in the bottom with a few chunks of meat laid on top. Not very filling, really. There was also a drink with the meal. It looked like tea but tasted like water from a drainpipe with some soot stirred in. We were later told that the drink was a form of fruit juice. After the meal we returned on deck to watch the departure of the vessels from Portsmouth.

Aided by tugs we left the berth and followed the Polish **Dar Pomorza** along with the rest of the



fleet westwards towards Cowes in the Parade of Sail to salute the Duke of Edinburgh on the Royal Yacht *Britannia*, with *HMS Ajax* in attendance.

After the sail-past we headed towards the Nab Tower and then set course and sail for St. Malo. On board, tea was at 15.30 and dinner at 19.30. All the meals were basically the same and very simple. At about 20.15 that evening we passed *Halcyon*.



While aboard we were looked after by the training officer in theoretical seamanship Capt. Chesnikov, who was a master in the Russian fishing fleet and a lecturer in seamanship at the University Sea School of Murmansk. He talked to us about the ship and its use with three other training vessels; this is the only sailing vessel, though.

The *Kruzenstern* has a permanent crew of 200 and carries about 150 trainees on voyages usually of between two- and three-months duration. She is based in the Baltic Sea whereas the other three vessels are based in the Pacific, Far East and Black Sea.

Breakfast on the Monday morning was at 07.30 after which we assembled on deck at the foot of the mizzen mast to have practice and instruction in going aloft. The first task was to climb the rigging to

the mainsail yard and down the other side. When that was completed, volunteers went aloft again to furl the mainsail. When finished we climbed further up to the lower topsail yard to furl the lower topsail. Safety belts were worn at all times when aloft. Eventually we had furled all the sails on the mizzen mast, these were: mainsail, lower topsail, upper topsail, lower topgallant, upper topgallant and the skysail at the top. On the mainmast this is called the royal.

The vessel is square rigged on the fore, main and mizzen masts and fore and aft rigged on the gigger mast, aft, which carries a double gaffsail and a gaff topsail. Forward she carries three jibs, flying, outer and inner; also, a staysail. Between the masts she carries two main staysails, two mizzen staysails and a gigger staysail. All this amounts to 3,700 square metres of sail.

At 11.00 on the Monday morning we anchored off St. Malo. After lunch we were presented with an Operation Sail 74 badge and a stamped postcard signed by the Master showing the vessel under full sail. These were presented to us by twenty of the Russian trainees. The rest of the day was spent furling the other sails and getting to know a bit more about the ship. In the evening we were shown a couple of films: one a documentary about the underground railway system in some of the cities in Russia, the other a Russian war film.

Tuesday morning at 08.00 we weighed anchor and entered through the lock into the harbour in St. Malo where a very large crowd waited to see the vessel in. Some of us were allowed aloft to line the skysail yard on the mizzen mast 180 feet above the deck. Quite a sight!

Once alongside and cleared by Customs and Immigration we made our way to our own vessels feeling very proud of sailing on such a fine vessel - the envy of the fleet in fact.



High up on a yard of the Russian barque *Kruzenstern*, a sailing instructor shows British cadets how the giant sails are handled. In this picture are some of the British cadets who crossed the Channel on the vessel during the week of the Tall Ships race

Cadet Turner reviews the whole Tall Ships Race experience, giving a quick-moving impression of crowded days.

Halcyon days

When Capt. C. Phelan succeeded Capt. M. Stuart as the director of the Southampton School of Navigation, he planned to enter the school's sail training vessel *Halcyon* for the 1974 Tall Ships Race. Due to the organisation required and dates of courses, it was only possible to enter her for the last race from St. Malo to Portsmouth.

Volunteers were called for and from the 42 applicants a crew of 14 was chosen. The shipping companies involved were subsequently asked to second the cadets for the duration of the race. The companies' response was one of whole-hearted support for the venture and all agreed to sponsor their own cadets. Four B&C cadets took part in the race: Mike Brook, Rob Plumley, Chris Edwards and me. D. Sinclair, a B&C chief officer, at present a divisional officer at the school, was one of the watch officers.

The venture started at 08.30 on August 3, when we loaded our gear aboard and stored ship. We left our moorings in the Hamble after lunch and arrived in Portsmouth at about 16.30, when everyone turned to, to clean ship and prepare for the cocktail party we were holding at 19.30. Members of the STA (Sail Training Association) race committee and masters of the other vessels - including the 3,543-ton *Amerigo Vespucci* - were invited and the party was a great success. That evening we all went ashore to dances that were being held at the Mecca and Guildhall, and a great time was had by all.

The next day, Saturday, all the crews marched to Southsea where prizes for the previous races were being presented by the Duke of Edinburgh. After the prizegiving we were treated to a flying display by the Red Arrows. During the afternoon, crew exchanges took place for the sail in company over to France. In the evening we all piled into the open top buses to get to Southsea where "Beat the Retreat" was being played under the castle walls. This was followed by a magnificent firework display of which we (as competitors) had a grandstand view.

On Sunday Rob Plumley and I, together with a P&O cadet, made our way over to the *Kruzenstern*, a Russian four-masted barque which was to be our ship for the next two days. The *Kruzenstern* is one of the training vessels for the Russian fishing fleet, and we were the first people to sail on a Russian vessel in the Tall Ships Race. We left Portsmouth at 13.00, with the help of two tugs and a pilot who had great difficulty in conversing with the Russian master.

After leaving Portsmouth we took part in the Parade of Sail past *Britannia* and *HMS Ajax*. As we continued on our way round the island we passed *Halcyon* under full sail and were given three cheers by her crew.

We anchored off St. Malo the next morning just before lunch, and spent the afternoon furling sails, climbing the rigging and sunbathing. We were also shown films on underground railways in Russia and a liberation film about the Second World War. Early on Tuesday we manned the mizzen royal yard and entered St. Malo some 180ft up in the air. We tied up in the lock after much manoeuvring among a great fleet of small boats which came out to welcome us. We arrived back on-board *Halcyon* after lunch only to find that we were playing football that afternoon, as it turned out, against the *Kruzenstern*. Needless to say, from the 50 cadets on board they managed to field a team which beat us 8-2, both our goals being scored by Mike Brook. That evening we held a wine and cheese party on board *Halcyon* but unfortunately were unable to obtain any cheese. Its absence was not really missed.

During our stay in France we also competed in the rowing regatta in which we came third and the swimming which fell through due to lack of organisation. Apart from this the crews of *Halcyon*, *Sir Winston Churchill*, *Malcolm Miller*, *Rhona* and *Dodo* entertained a crowd of about 150 with an impromptu sing-song finishing with a conga through the streets.

A dance was also held for the crews on the last night in the local casino. This would have been more enjoyable if drinks were slightly cheaper; beer at £1.65 a glass was somewhat expensive. (That's £16.70 today... Ed)



The day of the race dawned fine but slowly degenerated as it progressed. We moved off the berth only to find that the organisation of boats through the lock had collapsed. Consequently, we were 38 minutes late reaching the start line. Though we arrived with all sails set and the engine on full revs, it was switched off the second we crossed the line. Still by hard sailing we managed to achieve a fourth in our class out of eleven.

Malcolm Miller was first, *Dodo* second (after smashing her main boom and breaking a shroud). *Eendracht* was third followed by us.

It was certainly a fabulous experience taking part and one that I'm sure I'll never forget.



At the Club Buffet Supper on 5th September Post Captain Robin Plumley MBE gave a talk on some of his experiences on the Royal Research Ships and with the British Antarctic Survey. We were intrigued with his tale of the *RRS John Biscoe* at one time becoming ice-bound (a constant hazard) to such an extent that they had to be rescued by another vessel and abandon her, only to return when she was safely free again. They didn't have to leave a cat or a dog on board (see page 2) because the only ships operating in the area at that time were all part of the International antarctic brotherhood and all looked out for each other.



RRS John Biscoe abandoned and left to her own devices



Richard Olden, President Kelso, Staff Captain Dunn and Post Captain Plumley pay attention to the Captain's words.



The pool table at the RBL served as a suitable lectern for Robin's presentation.



Your editor was surprised and honoured when Capt. Pedersen presented him with a fine glass plaque engraved "In Appreciation of Outstanding Services to The Cachalots"

Well, Blow Me Down

At the recent Trafalgar Dinner (*report p.4*) the Shantymen had provided us with the words as they had rehearsed and wished to sing them. The words to *Blow the Man Down*, apart from the first line, were new to me;

As I was a 'walking down Paradise Street A saucy fat policeman I happened to meet.....

He says you're a Blackballer by the cut of your hair.....You're a Blackballer sir, by the boots that you wear.

The Black Ball Line operated fast packet ships from Liverpool to New York in the mid 19th century but nowhere is it mentioned in the version that we have sung at the Sea Pie Supper for many years. Of course, there are many versions, and verses, of these shanties but in *our* version, Jack meets not a saucy fat policeman, but Maggie, a *flash looking packet* who he *takes to be Dutch*. She was *round in the counter and bluff in the bow* and is obviously a 'working girl'. She tells him she has come *from the Black Arrow, bound to the Shakespeare*, two of the vessels in port I presume. He *takes her in tow* but has to return to sea the next day because *on that flash packet I'd spent all my pay*.

Our other favourite, *A-Roving*, tells a similar story,

In Amsterdam there lived a maid.....And she was mistress of her trade.....

But when me money was all spent..... 'Twas off to sea I sadly went.

In *Maggie Mae*, which we don't sing at the SPS, this Maggie's patch is Lime Street, another Liverpool St. frequented by seafarers, and she is found guilty of robbing a homeward bounder (of his money and clothes) and *taken away* (transported?). There were probably many less pleasurable ways that sailors were relieved of their payoffs.

The common theme is of Jack ashore, a gullible victim of his basic desires and of unscrupulous professional ladies. It is a tale we can all recognise, if not personally then certainly from shipmates and crew members.

Are these tales of roistering sailors about to come under the censorious pen of the ever growing easily offended brigade?

Also reported to be offending modern sensibilities is another of our favourites, *Spanish Ladies*, which predates the mid 19th century sea shanties and can be traced back to the Napoleonic Wars. It was probably picked up by soldiers from the later Peninsular Wars who were forbidden to bring back their Spanish wives, lovers and children.

Our Rule 2 states, "The CACHALOTS shall be non-political." and I shall interpret that to mean non-politically correct as well. So, let's continue to drink up our full bumpers, let us be jolly and drown melancholy, here's to each jovial and true-hearted soul.

TEC

A Shipyard Apprenticeship Part One

My Father, and The Robber and Impertinence and Old Metcalfe

My Father

In the late 1930s when I was a boy and on the few rare occasions when he was not working in the shipyard on Sunday mornings, my father used to take me for long hill walks on Divis Mountain or Cave Hill and, often sitting down to rest in the heather, looking down over Belfast City far below, we would talk, and that was the best bit.

I would try to get him to tell me about the First World War, but he was always managed to change the subject - except on one special occasion.

And when I remember my shipyard apprenticeship, my father, that one occasion, and the crucial role he had in shaping my life and my engineering career are always very much in my mind.

He was a soldier in the First World War, and, computing backwards from the date of his sadly early death, it is apparent that he had lied about his age when he went to the Army Recruiting Office to enlist in "the Skins," the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. Like many ex-service men, his war years were a closed book, years he preferred to forget, and the only time my father ever spoke about that period of his life was to explain to me, while discussing my future, that, by joining the Army, he had sacrificed the twin opportunities of an education and of an apprenticeship, both of which he would have enjoyed and valued. Forgive the seeming blasphemy, but I have long ago concluded that there are many more definitions than only one of the Supreme Sacrifice.

After leaving the Army, Alec Hunter spent the remainder of his life working as a shipyard labourer. For most of those years, between the two wars, work was often scarce and he often found himself travelling from shipbuilding town to shipbuilding town, a few months here, a few weeks there, Belfast, Birkenhead, Barrow-in-Furness, Glasgow. I remember sensing his anger and his pain as he spoke with bitterness and cynicism about those times. He referred to himself with self derision as a respectable tramp. Today he might have called himself an economic migrant.

When the second war broke out, my father offered his services to the Regiment once again. But his motives were more mature than in 1914. He knew of the German "Condor" involvement in the Spanish Civil War and he told me, during another of our Sunday morning walks on Cave Hill, that he believed Adolph Hitler to be an evil bastard and that the impending war would be the only truly righteous campaign in Britain's often dubious history. He was bitter and angry all over again having been rejected by the Army because shipbuilding was a "reserved occupation."

On another such morning, with Belfast spread out like a toy town far below us, I was telling him about the prize I had won at school for gaining the highest marks in an English test, and that the English Master was encouraging me to take up journalism. My father was not keen. I can see him now, eyes screwed up a little and watering slightly in the curling smoke from his Woodbine. And I can hear him telling me that a man should have a trade. "With a trade," he said, "you can go anywhere in the world and find gainful employment. Journalism, that's not a trade."

Determined to find a trade that I knew I would enjoy, I began to investigate other opportunities and to match them with my own special interests.

At school, I particularly enjoyed mathematics and especially that increment of the subject called Euclidean Geometry, so I sought an occupation in which geometry would be in daily use. Textile design appeared to be such an occupation, and I enrolled in evening classes, while still in full-time education, to study textile pattern making. Before my fifteenth birthday I could "peg" a pattern and weave it in linen on a hand loom, and I do believe I'm the only electrical engineer in the country, if not in the entire world, with an Intermediate City and Guilds Certificate in Textiles.

But, father had other ideas in mind for me and we went for another of our long walks on Cave Hill. "Electricity is the coming thing," he said, and back then, in 1946, he was quite right. Unfortunately his timing was badly wrong - it is only recently, with the advent of gas turbine and diesel alternator power pods, that electricity is finally arriving. That, however, is a different story which is not for now.

With hindsight, I must say that a humble trade apprenticeship was definitely not the most advantageous point of entry into that bright new electro-technical future. But, in those far off days, student apprenticeships were unheard-of in Belfast, so I found myself one February, with eighty-seven other sixteen-year-old boys, beginning an indentured five year apprenticeship in the Belfast shipyards of Harland and Wolff.

The shipyard training programme was excellent, and I received a thorough grounding - marine electrical installation work, marine repair work, plant maintenance, electrical manufacture of motors, generators and associated control gear, electricity generation in the firm's own power station, electrical testing - the list goes on and on.

Unfortunately for us, like student apprenticeships, day release for technical study, common in England, Scotland and Wales, was not available in Northern Ireland, where the apprentices had to endure the hard grind of evening classes and the failure rates and the drop out numbers were high. Of the eighty-eight hopeful sixteen-year-olds who signed up for Year One,

fewer than half sat the examinations - Electricity and Magnetism, Mathematics, and Applied Mechanics ~ at the end of the term. Only nine sat for the Ordinary National Certificate at the end of the third year. Only four succeeded in obtaining the Higher National, that coveted passport to advancement. Only two studied further.

I could, at this point, tell you about the high number of apprentice wood butchers who were signed on in 1947, in excess of three-hundred, I believe. I could also mention to you the lessons that had been learned in the war and the government-lead technical committees that were seeking to develop new, fire-resisting materials to replace timber for ships' internal bulkheads and, consequently, two hundred apprentice steel fighters were recruited. I could mention the inter trades union strife, and the famous and much-pilloried "who-twangs-the-string" strike that took place a decade later. I could ask who you think was responsible for all that misery and unrest - was it the employers who recruited and trained so many woodworkers who would not be needed, or the "Commie" trade unions seizing opportunities for mischief as desperate tradesmen tried to cling on to the dwindling remnants of their livelihoods?

But that's bordering on political argument, I don't really want to go there and doubt if you want to go there either, so it is about time I tell instead about some of the characters I encountered during my apprenticeship - the Robber, the demon Metcalfe, Hope Ferguson, and the dreaded Protestant Pope. Second thoughts, maybe not the Pope because that particular tragic episode had definite political overtones.

and The Robber

So - the Robber, poor deluded man. Chargehand Electrician. Main Yard Plant Maintenance Workshop. Later promoted to Senior Foreman, Central Plant Workshop.

There I was, beginning my second year, and working under the Robber. Actually, I was working 220 feet above the ground on the Arrol gantries in the Main Yard. The Arrol gantries were erected in 1907 specially to facilitate the building of two, later three ships, the "Olympic", the "Titanic" and the "Britannic."

The gantries, long since pulled down and sold as scrap metal, were massive steel "Mecanno" lattice structures, with two outer "walls" and a double middle wall. I don't know where the name "wall" came from, because the entire structure was basically an open lattice design. Maybe the name came from the small cranes, known to the workmen as "wall creepers," which ran back and forth along the walls and were used to lift ships' ribs and later shell plates into place for riveting.

The machine gun rattle of the pneumatically-powered rivet guns and rivet hammers -it's a wonder I'm not stone deaf! The winter cold ten times more severe up there. The early morning frost on the ladders and handrails would remove human skin. Ice on the walkways was a constant winter hazard, yet the maintenance men climbed all over the gantries with the agility of monkeys and never a safety harness in sight. Today's Health and Safety Executive would have apoplectic fits at such conditions.

But I loved the work. After a few days of timidity and caution, I became as agile and fearless as the others. The views over the six square miles of the shipyard, the slipways, the dry docks, the engine shops and the fitting-out basins were unique and spectacular, as indeed were the views over Belfast and the Lough. The crimson and golden winter sunsets. The cold heavy rain. The damp clammy fogs. The swirling, swooping dark clouds of starlings each evening, until slowly the birds began to settle to roost on the tall cranes for the night. Strangely, I don't remember the starlings flying away in the mornings. There was a rumour to the effect that Harland and Wolff would pay a. fortune, £10 a week for life, to the person who could think of a way to get rid of the starlings before the cranes and gantries collapsed under the weight of accumulated bird droppings . . . but I was going to tell you about the people.

The Robber was an unlikely sort of man to be a chargehand. The tradesmen seemed to treat him most casually and with disrespect that was almost contempt. Yet he was the boss, and he did rule our roost, as I was about to learn.

I don't know what particular sanctions the Robber used to control the tradesmen, but he had one particular sanction that he used to keep the apprentices in their proper subservient places – Metcalf ...

and Impertinence

Bob Metcalfe, trained in the diamond mines in South Africa, was an old man with a particularly cantankerous nature. He couldn't have been much more than sixty, but he moved stiffly and slowly, spoke with a tremulous voice and looked ancient to sixteen-year-old lads. Old Bob was a very conscientious and hard working man, a loner who preferred his own company and not at all popular with the others in the squad.

And therein lay the Robber's sanction for use against wayward apprentices. "You *behave* yourself, Sunny Jim, or you'll find yourself working with *Metcalf*"

And "working with Metcalfe" was such a terrifying prospect that the offending apprentice would invariably mend his ways. And, yes, you know what is coming. No cigar for guessing that I made the mistake of assuming that / could treat the Robber with the same casual disrespect as the tradesmen.

There was another apprentice, Frank. We were quite good friends, had been to the same school, were both Patrol Leaders in the same Scout Troop, helped each other with evening class work and homework, even chased after the same girls, and were both enthusiastic model makers in our spare time.

My feeble claims to fame in that direction included a number of flying balsa wood aeroplanes with rubber band powered propellers, some working weaving looms and some crude cat's whisker radio sets, later to be improved by the introduction of thermionic valve technology.

Frank's model making enterprises were much more ambitious; a steam engine that drove a flywheel, a single shot pistol (I'm damned if I know where he acquired the armoury-sized drill. I suspect he had succeeded in finding a length of pre-drilled 2.2 rifle barrel) but his undoubted masterpiece was a battery-powered, electrically-driven, scaled model of a Flower class corvette.

One lunchtime, Frank was sounding me out about the possibility of collaboration to add a radio-controlled steering engine to his Flower class corvette as he was bored by its constant straight line course. Mind you, the model yachts at Queen Mary's Park could do no better. But we are still in the 1940s. We did know about Transistors, but that technology was still twenty-five years away. Nevertheless, Frank and I were eager to achieve a first, and I had the beginnings of an idea. I was suggesting the possible use of a "flip/flop" circuit and scheming how to harness the outputs to move a tiller. Neither of us detected the looming presence of the Robber on his rubber-soled shoes.

"Have ye no work to do? What are you two young buggers talking about anyway?" Robber demanded. He always had a charming turn of phrase.

"Er, well it's modern stuff, Mr Robb," I replied, my insolent inference obvious. The Robber glared at me, his features reddening and darkening in a frown as he pondered my insult. "You cheeky young sod! Right, for that you can bring your toolbox off the gantry tonight. In the morning you start working with Metcalfe."

Old Metcalfe

The Robber knew how to twist the knife - the remainder of the day and all night to dwell upon the impending misery. Among all the other unpleasant considerations, I worried about how I should address the old paragon of unpopularity. "Mr Metcalfe?" No - wasn't done. Only the managers were Mist'ers. "Bob?" That didn't seem appropriate. "Mate?" No, definitely not.

Next morning, a simple event took place and it enhanced my working life for ever.

At school, excellent teachers had given me invaluable gifts, a love of mathematics, an abiding love of English, an insatiable curiosity and an enquiring mind. Next morning, in the shipyard, I was about to begin to receive the most invaluable gift of all...

"I'm to work with you, Ahem - Bob," I told the much-dreaded dragon.

"All right," said Bob in his tremulous tones. "Pick up the tools and come on."

So I picked up his canvas tool bag and walked beside him to the workshop door. I was on his left and just slightly in front. By a happy coincidence the door hinges were on the left. And, being of a naturally polite disposition, I reached out, opened the door and stood back to allow the old man to precede me through the door.

"Thank you," he said, with a flicker of a smile. We walked towards the Plating Shed, which was Bob Metcalfe's domain. He asked if I would be going to the big match (Linfield v Glentoran) on Saturday and seemed to lose interest in further conversation when I told him with a slight smile that I had no interest in football.

The heavy steel personnel door to the Plating Shed was hinged on the right and opened outwards. To my surprise, old Bob accelerated a little, opened the door and insisted that I should go through first. And the pattern of our association was set. I treated old Bob with the courtesy due to him, but which was natural to my behaviour, while he judged me to be a well-mannered, respectful boy whom he could teach.

The invaluable gift? Well, that was simply old Bob's wonderful teaching and extensive knowledge.

Prior to my time as his apprentice, I would say that I was interested in electricity, but Bob Metcalfe increased and intensified that interest to something close to a passion. He taught me more in three days than I was to learn in three years at night school. He gave me the gift of my profession in the form of a solid foundation for a wide and varied career of which I have enjoyed every moment. How many men can make that claim? And what gift could possibly be more precious? Just because I opened a door.

So I smile when I think of the Robber. The poor man couldn't have known the truly enormous favour that he did for me. I did want to tell him, but instead, on the next two occasions on which I encountered him, the Robber still made his displeasure plain. But those accounts are for another occasion - if the Hon Editor honours me with a future invitation to contribute to his most excellent Magazine.

Eddie Hunter

This article has previously appeared in the Official Organ of the Seven Seas Club.

Gone Aloft

Reginald Walter Pretty



Reg Pretty, who 'went aloft' on the 1st September, aged 76, was well known in the Club and around the port.

He went to sea with Blue Star Line but settled ashore on his marriage to Hilary. He worked as 1st Mate in the local fleet of Hanson Marine Aggregates and was known affectionately as 'Reg the Dredge', which was also his email byname.

Reg became a Cachalot in 2003 and his lugubrious manner belied a very sociable man. He and Hilary were keen supporters of the Club's social activities and he was also an active volunteer on the *Shieldhall* for many years.

At his funeral service at the Wessex Vale Crematorium, on the 20th September, it was standing room only, with many Cachalots, fellow volunteers from the *Shieldhall*, ex shipmates, port workers and other friends among the mourners.

Our condolences to Hilary and his family.



Captain Charles Allan McDowall MSc.C.Eng. MI Mech.E. MRINA. FNI. HCMM (born 27.5.1938)

On the completion of his pre-sea training aboard HMS Worcester in 1954 Allan joined the Clan Line in January 1955, then P&O in 1958 (as Third Officer) before seeking shore employment in 1961 as a Floor Apprentice with Stothert & Pitt and graduating to the Design Office and R&D. He took HNC and the Inst.Mach.E direct examination to degree level before being sent to Loughborough University where he acquired an M.Tech in Engineering Design. Thereafter, Allan served with a number of Engineering companies (acquiring various qualifications) before returning to sea (with a First Mates Certificate) in 1975, as Second Officer with Esso Petroleum where, in his "spare time" he wrote a thesis on "The behaviour of Very Large Ship hulls". In 1978, he attended The School of Navigation, Warsash and sat for his Master's Certificate early in 1979

before returning to Esso. Allan joined the SMMC in 1981 and Denholm Ship Management as Chief Officer in 1982 and thereafter he served with Allsworth Shipping, Iran Tanker Co., ARAMCO, Zodiac Maritime Agencies (where he was promoted to Master), World Wide Shipping, Wallem Ship Management and MOL Tankship Management.

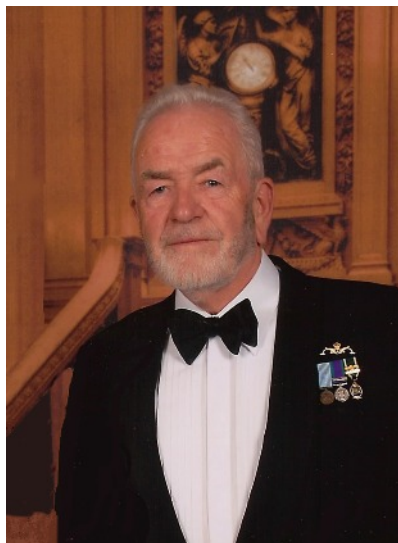
In 1988 he wrote a thesis entitled "Anchoring Large Vessels - a new approach" and those who have used it are loud in their praise.

In June 1995 in command of the 263,000 dwt VLCC "Atlantic Ruby" and in severe weather conditions, he rescued the five occupants of an 11m yacht. He was a keen small boat sailor himself, in both his 26' Evolution sloop, "Just Fine", and a 45' Bruce Roberts, "Penn-Ultimate", which he called his 'little ship' and which was the love of his life. Allan also held a Private Pilots Licence for small aircraft.

Allan trod the very fine line between genius and eccentricity throughout his life. He was a kindly and generous man, always willing to help others and contribute to anyone in need. He served on various Committees with the SMMC and the Nautical Institute.

Allan "went aloft" on Tuesday the 18th September, exactly 100 years to the day that his Uncle Colonel Allan Armstrong DSO, after whom he was named and who Allan always said 'sat on his shoulder' throughout his life, was killed in WW1. after a very long battle fought bravely and with dogged determination and at his well-attended funeral (on October 4th. at West Wittering) eulogies were delivered by his loving wife, Helen, Club Captain Flemming Pedersen and Cachalot Dennis Barber with whom Allan had worked shoreside. Representatives of the numerous maritime-related organisations and societies of which he was a member were also in attendance.

Gone Aloft



Lt Cdr Gerald M Pugh R.N.R. RD **

**Master Home Trade, Cert. Ed., Dip. Social Sc.,
Dip. Youth Work, Msc (Psychology & Mental Health)**

Gerry passed away suddenly after a two year battle with cancer aged 82 in hospital in Viana, Portugal, on 9th October 2018.

He was born on 1st November 1935 in Aberystwyth, Wales . His varied career included service in the RNR, RFA & MN, including submarines. Before retirement he was a teacher, senior lecturer at University & social worker.

Gerry was a courageous, kind, generous man and was loved and respected by family & friends.

Greatly loved & missed by wife Julia. Loving father of Adrian, Nadia & Marek. Grandfather to Lilli, Jessie & Ash. Stepbrother to Roger and greatly missed by Richard, Zoe, Riley & David.

The funeral took place in the village of Covas in North Portugal on 12th October 2018, the village he loved where he had owned a house for thirty years.

A Memorial Service in celebration of Gerry's life was held at the RAF Yacht Club in Hamble on Thursday 15th November which was attended by over 90 family and friends, including many Cachalots. Tribute was made by Lionel Hall who recounted many tales of shared (and bared) experiences during their friendship.



Ralph Michael Nares Godfrey

Mike Godfrey went to sea in Shaw Savile Line, serving on both the cargo and passenger ships. This was followed by a period as Second Officer in Geest Line, and then 1974 he moved to P&O Southern Ferries as Second Officer and then Chief Officer on the Panther on the Southampton – San Sebastian route. He also served on the Eagle on the Southampton – Lisbon route during 1975.

In the spring of 1976 he rejoined the Panther, now sailing as the Terje Vigen on charter to J A Reinecke on the Aarhus – Oslo Line route, as Chief Officer/Relief Master, and continued to the end of the charter in March 1977. He was then promoted Master on the P&O freight ferry Dorset on charter to Brittany Ferries on the Poole – Cherbourg route, serving back to back with Cachalot Captain Gordon Renshaw. When that charter ended Mike had a brief spell in Geest Line before being appointed Master in the rapidly expanding P&O Ferrymasters freight ferries fleet on their North Sea and Irish Sea routes, where he remained until retirement.

Mike came from Totton and lived there and in Bishops Waltham for most of his working life. He joined the Cachalots in March 1974, left for a short period and re-joined, and was a frequent attendee at Sea Pie Supper. His wife Liz came from Cumbria and they moved there to Penrith to enjoy their retirement. He was fit and well until the last three weeks and went aloft on 15th September.

B.Peck

Time of arrival

Lloyd's List Viewpoint 1 November 2018

with kind permission of LL and the author, Cachalot Michael Grey

"When are we going to get there?" This was a regular question from passengers hoping to gain some inside information for their sweepstake on the ship's daily run. Our answer was always the same: "it depends how fast we go".

The messages from the company were more peremptory. "Confirm your Estimated Time of Arrival" - it would instruct us, often when we were weeks away from our destination. It would have been dismissed as facetious, but the answer really ought to have been the same as that issued to the questing passenger – it depended upon how fast we went.

These exchanges came to mind the other day reading the various reports about the Port of Rotterdam and its mission to make itself greener and kinder to the planet. If ships arrived on time and sailed when they were supposed to, they suggested, enormous quantities of planet-menacing CO2 would be saved.

Rotterdam is not the first to come up with the exciting conclusion that if ships could be programmed to arrive in port whenever the port was ready to receive them, they would not waste all this effort and fuel arriving early, and then swinging around the hook for days on end. It is suggested that aided by all this amazing digitisation and communication, soon to make itself available to the maritime world, such precision will be a piece of cake and ships will be operated like trams or trains (perhaps not those running in the South of England, where timetabling is rather more fluid).

If you are some consultant sitting in a warm office with a huge computer at your elbow and a volume of "Your Digital Future" on your desk, it is easy to make such pronouncements, which have been repeated, sporadically, in various forms, for most of my working life. I would hesitate to say that such confidence is shared by mariners and others who know the practicalities of ship operation.

Of course, "just in time" has been around a good few years and those running container ships make a decent job of adhering to their schedules, even though they curse them as unrealistic. But they are not set in stone and everyone knows that the whole timetable can be reduced to a shambles by all the same problems that have afflicted shipping since men first left the land. You can have the very best weather forecasts, routing advice backed up with minute by minute advice from all that useful satellite information churned out by the meteorologists, but weather doesn't always fulfil their prognoses. And sometimes, in oceans like the North Atlantic or North Pacific, it is just impossible to avoid the worst weather nature wants to throw at you, such is the size and ferocity of the system.

And that is just container shipping. What about the far less programmable operations of bulk shipping, where ships are on passage longer and more prone to delay? If you know that you are likely to be held up, or slowed down by adverse currents or head winds (which still can knock knots off your speed), you are inclined to crack on as your every instinct, and the expectation of the charterer, is that it is better to arrive early, rather than late. So you burn more fuel than perhaps you ought, but you probably won't be criticised as you are anchored with notice of arrival posted and you are in the queue for the berth. But, circa 2018, you will be criticised for damaging the planet by your zeal to arrive so speedily.

Of course there are things that could be done in the cause of "efficiency" – the word that seems to be enthusing those with digitisation to sell. Why cannot, for goodness sake, a ship book a berth, rather than have to go through this charade of "arrival"? You can book a Panama Canal transit, provisionally to start with and then firming it up once the ETA becomes clearer. Why cannot this be a feature of every port? This magic of the "arrived ship" may be a money spinner for the legal profession, but could not sensible seafarers work out something which would save fuel, the planet and a lot of chewed fingernails? And it is the ports which hold the answer to this conundrum, not people who run ships.

It is also worth noting that there is a growing climate of opinion which suggests that the "low-hanging fruit" of planet saving is to slow ships down substantially, which will make it even harder to arrive to a precise schedule, even if you are awash with digitisation and the biggest of Big Data. Ships designed to be slow won't be able to crack open the throttle to make up lost time, even if they would like to, and if they did, the climate change zealots would only be demanding the master's head.

So while precise and efficient shipping might be a tremendous target to aim for, you probably ought to temper the advice with a degree of practicality. The law, custom and practice, along with a good deal of seamanship, all need to be applied, whatever amazing gifts digitisation might bring.

rjmgrey@dircon.co.uk



Reflections on Life

Cachalot Phil Messenger, who contributed 'Worcester Memories' in the last newsletter, has published a collection of his poems.

He says, "I had a few dark years and found that writing poetry was a good way to find understanding. At times though I find myself moved by events or places, so I write something a bit less personal."

Tears on the Water

Many hundreds of American sailors and marines were entombed in the wreck of the USS “Arizona” when she was sunk at Pearl Harbour. Since then, the wreck has been sensitively transformed into a Memorial and a Cemetery-site, and survivors from the ship have the right to have their ashes interred in the wreck when their time comes, so that they may be re-united with their ship-mates.

The wreck oozes oil, which is monitored and is seen as no threat to the environment. Rangers who stand on duty at the site speak of these small, continuous traces as tears. *Arcadia* 2013.

*The multi-coloured sheen of oil is spread
as if the souls of all those boys long-dead
still linger there -----It's said
that though the wreck has every day since bled,
there's grief enough for many years ahead.*

*The oil will flow, just gently bleeding still,
reminding us they're there, and ever will
be for us all a glimpse of Calvary's hill.
They died for us – their lives not to fulfil.*

*Or is it tears perhaps? – this gentle flow
which marks the water's surface, while below,
resting in peace with friends from long ago,
they lie all quiet – and we should leave them so.*



New Member

Colin Crimp is a retired Naval Architect who started his career apprenticed to Vickers Ltd (Shipbuilding Group) in 1965 and transferring to their ship model testing tank in 1972. He joined Marine Consultants Keel Marine Ltd in 1973 and stayed with them until he retired, as Technical Director, in 2009.

He qualified as a B.Sc (Newcastle) Naval Architecture and is a Fellow of the Royal Institute of Naval Architects and a Member of the Institute of Marine Engineering, Science & Technology.

His professional interests include shipbuilding, ship design and marine survey, with a particular interest in nuclear submarines.

His leisure interests include vintage car restoration, choral singing and he has his own canal narrowboat on the Kennet & Avon canal.

He and his wife Jill have attended many of the club's social functions as guests of their friend Ian Thomson.

The CACHALOTS

The Southampton Master Mariners' Club

**1st Floor, Southampton Royal British
Legion Club, Eastgate Street
SOUTHAMPTON, SO14 3HB**

Tel: 023 8022 6155

Web site: www.cachalots.org.uk

E-mail: office@cachalots.org.uk

captain@cachalots.org.uk

staffcaptain@cachalots.org.uk

boatsteerer@cachalots.org.uk

storekeeper@cachalots.org.uk

postcaptain@cachalots.org.uk

functions@cachalots.org.uk

membership@cachalots.org.uk

editor@cachalots.org.uk

The Club room is currently open **two** days a week, Thursday and Friday, 1130 - 1500. Liz will be only too happy to serve you a drink. There is no catering on site but there are many sandwich outlets within easy walking distance.

Suggestions for events, for improvements, offers of help, articles and anecdotes for inclusion in this newsletter will all be received with pleasure. We are even prepared to receive complaints if they are constructive.

Dates for your Diary

Sat	1 Dec	Christmas Lunch, MedBar
Wed	2 Jan	Docklands New Year Service St.Mary's Church, St Mary's Street
Thu	3 Jan	Clubroom re-opens
Thu	10 Jan	AGM 1830 Clubroom
Wed	23 Jan	Burns Supper, RBL 1900
Fri	8 Feb	Sea Pie Supper, St. Mary's 1815
Sat	16 Feb	Curry Lunch, Kuti's Royal Pier

The cut-off date for the next edition will be

15th February 2019

250 Club

Sept	Lesley Odd	M J Sebbage
Oct	N S Becket	A M Northover